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Gender Drift: Testo Junkie, Queer Performativity and Molecular Becoming

Staged as a drift between and beyond the terms of normative gender, Paul B.

Preciado's Testo Junkie (2013) invites us to reconceptualize the *dérive* as a practice of somatechnics -- that is, as an intervention at the intersection of the body and the semiotic, biochemical and political technologies that produce the contemporary subject. Informed by but extending beyond the forms imagined and practised by the Situationist International in détournement, the dérive and the project of 'unitary urbanism' -- the latter imagining the unification of 'space and architecture with the social body, and with the individual body as well' (Sadler 1999: 118) -- Preciado's drift also suggests new ways of thinking about queer spatial dramaturgies by emphasizing molecular becoming over citation as a way of understanding the performativity of gender. As I will explore below, this perspective is valuable to the study of queer performance because it provides rich conceptual tools for understanding forms of resistant engagement with the normative conditions of public space without recourse to a reductive figuring of queerness as fluidity -- a move with particular consequence when 'the trans "subject" often figures as little more than a deconstructive methodological tool' (Hines 2010: 599) within queer studies. In doing so, I also want to begin to articulate points of contact between Situationist conceptions of the city as a space of transformational possibility and queer performance studies' engagement with utopian thinking, most notably in José Esteban Muñoz's formulation of queerness as an ideality that allows us to 'imagine a space outside of heteronormativity' (Muñoz 2009: 35).

In the first part of this article -- and conscious of the limited English-language scholarship on their work to date -- I introduce Preciado's narration of 'voluntary intoxication' via testosterone in Testo Junkie as a kind of bio-dérive: a gender drift enabled by the off-label use of synthetic testosterone that is attuned to the urban space in which it unfolds.^{[note]1} As a work of 'auto-theory', Preciado's text straddles biographical, performative and theoretical registers of enquiry, and deploys the molecular as a simultaneously literal (referring to testosterone and other drugs) and metaphorical (invoking Deleuzian conceptions of becoming-minority) means of imagining a 'political homeopathy of gender' (Preciado 2013: 142) as the basis for social and political change. Though mirroring the structure of the dérive as a form of 'experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society' (Situationist International 2006 [1958]: 62) and involving 'a playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects' (Debord 2006 [1958]: 70), Preciado's drift requires us to consider 'behaviour' and 'effects' in terms of their materiality and, consequently, as an expression of biopower that might be appropriated to produce alternative configurations of the subject and the social.

In the second part, I carry these ideas forward in considering the status of the dérive as a queer performance strategy by reading Rosana Cade's Walking: Holding (2011) and Nando Messias' The Sissy's Progress (2014) as works structured by drifts through urban spaces. As I have discussed elsewhere in theorizing the conditions of queer optimism (Greer 2018), these performances articulate the necessity for queer, trans and gender non-conforming people to appear in public spaces while simultaneously foregrounding the literal, material conditions -- and risks -- attached to gender that drifts from its most normative instance. In this discussion, though, I want to turn from an analysis of an individual's relation to the public sphere to

consider the *dérive* as a mode of becoming -- that is, not premised on the notion of an already complete subject who then encounters difference and change (while remaining, at core, largely the same) but involving a Deleuzian conception of the subject as a constantly changing, machinic assemblage of forces (see Colebrook 2002: 83--6) wherein body and cityscape intersect and impact upon each other. If the intention of psychogeography -- the outcome of 'mapping' the experience of a *dérive* -- is to uncover 'compulsive currents within the city along with unprescribed boundaries of exclusion and unconstructed gateways of opportunity' (Jenks and Neves 2000: 8), then Walking: Holding and The Sissy's Progress call attention to how such boundaries and opportunities are not merely external to the body but part of its ongoing materialization. Invoking Luce Irigaray's figuring of embodiment as a 'mobile set of differences' (see Chanter 1995: 46), Rosi Braidotti suggests that we consider the body as 'an interface, a threshold, a field of intersecting material and symbolic forces; it is a surface where multiple codes (race, sex, class, age, etc.) are inscribed' (2003: 44). In these performances, that interface is one in which audience and performer are implicated in uncertain ethical encounters structured by what Karen Barad ascribes to matter as a state of 'not mere being, but its ongoing un/doing' (2015: 411).

This reading of performance and Preciado's work is informed by Braidotti's theorization of a non-unitary or 'nomadic' subjectivity characterized by a process ontology of qualitative transformation or becoming that privileges change and interaction over stasis (2013: 344). My motivation for placing Preciado and Braidotti in conversation is consciousness of an overlapping vocabulary drawn from the work of Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and, less directly, Baruch Spinoza, in which the Molar line of being (identity, fixity, majority) is distinguished from the anti-essentialist

potential of the Molecular (change, potentia and becoming). Both theorists' work imagines a horizon for sexuality 'beyond gender' in the sense of 'being dispersed, not binary, multiple, not dualistic, interconnected, not dialectical and in a constant flux, not fixed' (Braidotti 2013: 350) and similarly resists an organic humanism to emphasize the ways in which contemporary technologies function to 'become part of the body: they dissolve into it, becoming somatechnics' (Preciado 2013: 78). In the following discussion, though, I am particularly interested in their mutual figuring of the potential of micropolitical interventions as embodied, material practices. Drawing on the work of Guattari, Preciado emphasizes the potential of 'structural modifications generated by micropolitical changes such as the consumption of drugs, changes in perception, in sexual conduct, in the invention of new languages' (142). In turn, Braidotti presents the argument that one must 'start from micro-instances of embodied and embedded self and the complex web of social relations that compose the self' (2013: 356). As I will elaborate below, these positions allow us to consider the *dérive* on terms other than those of the flâneur who roams the streets untouched, embodying a masculinist tradition of walking as 'individualist, heroic, epic and transgressive' (see Heddon and Turner 2012: 224), and to prefer instead an account of contact, exposure and situated embodiment.

Testo Junkie

First published in Spanish in 2008, and then in English in 2013, Testo Junkie intercuts a history of the development of the pharmaceutical and pornographic industries across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with first-person, performative narratives of Preciado's experience of self-administering testosterone

gel over a period of nine months. Through both strands, Preciado elaborates an account of a contemporary 'pharmaco-pornographic' era characterized by the 'bio-molecular (pharmaco) and semiotic-technical (pornographic) government of sexual subjectivity' (2013: 34). Sutured by sometimes sexually explicit accounts of their relationships to French writers Virgine Despentes and Guillaume Dustan, the work 'updates Foucaultian biopolitics via Deleuzian understanding of the molecular; the work of Judith Butler; and Marxism; and the theorists of post-Fordist capitalism' (Perez 2016: 46). Within each strand, the text itself drifts. In one sequence, the text moves from Preciado's self-identification as a 'copyleft' gender hacker through hand-drawn diagrams of the chemical structure of testosterone and its absorption by the body to recollection of choosing sado-masochistic photographs for Del LaGrace Volcano's book Sex Works (2005) before returning, once more, to the sensation of testosterone gel that 'dissolves into the skin as a ghost walks through a wall' (2013: 67). In a later chapter titled 'Testo Mania', Preciado strings together a ghost-like memory of Dustan witnessed twelve days after his death with news that two months of exposure to 250 milligrams of testosterone has caused a continual emission of 'dark, gelatinous blood' before reframing Dustan's death as the sign of the arrival of a sixth global planetary extinction event through which only bacteria might survive (246).

Rhizomatic in form, Preciado's text shifts between micro and macro scales of body and society to advance the argument that the bio-chemical, cybernetic and synthetic 'protheses' that serve as political instruments for the regulation of gender and sexuality can be put to alternative uses. Orientated on an interrogation of what Braidotti has explored as the 'biogenetic structure of late capitalism' (2011: 133) and informed by Judith Butler's theorization of gender performativity, Preciado's thesis

consequently emphasizes the necessity of seizing control of 'common' biocodes -- those which are 'discursive, endocrinological, chemical, visual, etc.' (Preciado 2013: 380) -- for the production of subjectivity. If the Situationist International understood the use of drugs as a kind of revolt -- an idea to which I return below -- then Preciado's deployment of the same is perhaps more deliberately paranoid in its claim on agency. Key to this assertion is the understanding that the body is not merely a passive substrate on which culture acts but an active 'techno-organic interface' by which alternative, transformative configurations of subjectivity and the social might be sought. While living as sexual subjects means that we are already complicit with dominant repressive formations, 'at the same time we materialize the power of the pharmaco-pornographic system and its possibility of failure' (Preciado 2008: 113). Consequently, where Preciado's work imagines potentially utopian formulations of the subject, it does so from within hegemonic structures of power and meaning making rather than through reference to some imagined external position.

If synthetic hormones -- alongside Playboy -- are the 'paradigmatic offspring' (Preciado 2013: 34) of pharmacopornographic times, they therefore provide primary tools for its revision. An essential component of Preciado's narrative is a repeated discrimination between the models of transition enshrined within medico-legal frameworks and their own unlicensed use of testosterone as an act of radical auto-experimentation intended to challenge and rewrite the codes of normative gender. Though Preciado refuses the logic of cisgender designation, they are not taking the hormone to become a man nor seeking legal recognition as male.

I do not want the female gender that has been assigned to me at birth. Neither do I want the male gender that transsexual medicine can furnish and that the state will award me if I behave in the right way. I don't want any of it. (138)

Crucially, Preciado recognizes that such a position is born of relatively privileged and independent circumstances -- 'because I don't need to go out and look for work, because I'm white, because I have no intention of having a bureaucratic relationship to the state' (61) -- and which risks affirming a prejudicial link between criminality and trans identity at the very moment when the French state health service has begun to reimburse the cost of drugs, operations and other treatment.^{[note]2} Yet the choice is not between legal and illegal but 'between two psychoses: in the one (transsexuality) testosterone appears as a medication, in the other (addiction) testosterone becomes the substance on which I am dependent' (257). It is precisely by risking the social intelligibility of a coherently gendered self that Preciado seeks a 'molecular revolution' -- one that is 'not a matter of going from woman to man, from man to woman, but of contaminating the molecular bases of the production of sexual difference' (142). Here too, Preciado's term evokes Guattari, for whom the notion of molecular revolution eschews large-scale, teleological visions of change to emphasize 'the subversion of every form of power at every level' (Guattari 1984: 62, original emphasis), and the micropolitical potential of flows that evade binary organization.

To this end, testosterone is liberated from its clinical application -- a means for cisgender women to become masculinized -- to serve as 'a threshold, a molecular door, a becoming between multiplicities' (Preciado 2013: 143). In Preciado's narration, that becoming has a specifically urban quality: while the initial experience of taking testosterone -- applied as a topical gel -- is a 'light slap on the skin', its influence is felt more profoundly one or two days later when 'an extraordinary lucidity settles in, gradually, accompanied by an explosion of the desire to fuck, walk, go out

everywhere in the city' (21). After each dose, Preciado experiences a renewed compulsion to drift:

I need to breathe the air of the city, to leave the space of domesticity, to walk outside where I feel at home. (57)

I begin to feel again that uncontrollable desire to go out, to feel the city awaken under my feet. (96)

Though Preciado's writing acknowledges the gendered distinction between the (feminine) home and the (masculine) city, their drift involves something more than the claim on an existing privilege and instead gestures towards what Braidotti describes as the challenge of finding 'new co-ordinates' for becoming that are not ordered by the logic of masculinity, compulsory heterosexuality and unitary being (Braidotti 2013: 346). Whereas the Majority is 'static, self-replicating and sterile' and 'stuck with the burden of self-perpetuating Being and the task of keeping up existing patterns' (344), the nomadic subject of Preciado's *dérive* is attuned to their own becoming-difference that is also a becoming-city, wherein 'the feeling of being in perfect harmony with the rhythm of the city' is simultaneously one in which Preciado's body is 'present to itself' (Preciado 2013: 21).

In describing their gender drift as a process of becoming in/as the city, Preciado's advocacy of the principle of 'auto-experimentation' directly invokes a tradition evident in Walter Benjamin's 'psychoaesthetic' encounters with European cities while under the influence of hashish, mescaline, opium and morphine (362--3) -- as well as, implicitly, the SI's own consumption of hash, mescal and other narcotics. Here, too, Preciado's discourse slips between an account of voluntary self-intoxication, the characterization of coke, Ecstasy and speed as 'city drugs with the appropriate

molecular charge for cohabiting and communicating in a specific urban location' (252) and an account of an era in which 'every city is a different narcotic terrain' (262). This deployment of the consumption of drugs to describe the domain of 'micropolitical' interventions is not unproblematic. In scoping the wider tradition of Situationist experiments with self-intoxication, Christopher Collier and Joanna Figiel examine the SI's use of intoxication 'as a de- and re-composition of subjectivity' (2015: 161) with the 'letting go' that characterized the *dérive* comprising 'both a dissolution of subjectivity under the influences of an environment, but also its potential autonomous recomposition, via the calculated assemblage of such influences' (162). In the words of Raoul Vaneigem, former member of the Situationist International, 'in losing myself I find myself; forgetting that I exist, I realize myself' (2001 [1967]: 195). Collier's and Figiel's concern, though, is that this once rebellious tactic of individual, artistic self-composition might be readily compatible with contemporary neoliberal logics of value production, particularly given that 'creativity, desire, play and social participation -- the central demands of the Situationist programme -- have become key sites of accumulation in post-Fordist capitalism' (2015: 169).

Preciado's gender drift may evade -- or at least resist -- this outcome to the extent that it foregrounds the constrained discursive field within which individual choice is exercised. As Elizabeth Stephens notes, it is part of Preciado's argument that 'personal' decisions are 'made within the context of, and mediated by, a range of political, philosophical and cultural factors, and that our own sexual subjectivities are formed at the point of their convergence' (2010: 5). In acknowledging that 'romantic autoexperimentation carries the risk of individualism and depoliticization' (Preciado 2013: 351), Preciado ultimately insists upon the necessity of participating in the

creation of 'other common, shared, collective, and copyleft forms of sexuality' (55) in a manner that Guattari might understand as a mode of transversality: a group phenomenon working to open closed hierarchies and logics, and sustain new assemblages among heterogeneous members. This emphasis on collective intervention is most clearly apparent in Preciado's involvement with drag king workshops -- first in New York and later across Europe, working with Diane Torr and Del LaGrace Volcano -- in which the sharing of individual experiences among participants gives rise to 'collective experience of the arbitrary and constructed dimension of our gender' (368, original emphasis). For Preciado, this revelation extends beyond the workshop setting to 'spread to the rest of daily life, causing modifications within social interactions' (373), with the artifice of drag serving to expose a molecular potentiality that is already existent within all bodies.

Nonetheless, Preciado's affirmation of the drift is not unconditional: the pursuit of an 'open process of mutation' (365) extends in the knowledge that self-experimentation may be constrained by the limited biopolitical options for a body that 'abandons the practices that society deems masculine or feminine' and 'drifts gradually toward pathology' (256). If a tendency within queer theory 'to focus on the "creative agency of individuals" may underemphasize hegemonic power relations' (Davis 2009: 101), then Preciado's work unfolds in consciousness of the situated nature of fluidity as a (potentially) subversive act.

To that end, Preciado's openness does not involve an appeal to autonomous 'choice' or flâneur-like distance from a field of action but instead resembles Susan Stryker's, Paisley Currah's and Lisa Jean Moore's discussion of 'transing' as a 'practice that takes place within, as well as across or between, gendered spaces' (2008: 13). It describes a dramaturgy of the drift in which the gendered nature of bodies and

spaces are mutually constitutive, and thus equally open to the possibility of micropolitical transformation. Moreover, it involves a rereading of queer performativity by which one might occupy and attempt to rewrite normative conditions without taking part in the kinds of gender parody that reintroduce the norm as persistent and privileged point of reference. Butler suggests that the possibility of doing gender differently resides in the fact that its reproduction always involves what Moya Lloyd glosses as 'repetition with a difference' (see Lloyd 1999: 200). Here, though, difference orientates on becoming rather than citation to exist in itself without contrastive reference to the polarities of masculinity or femininity. To invoke Braidotti, it points towards a nomadic becoming in which difference is 'about the desire for change, for flows and shifts of multiple desires' (2003: 53, original emphasis). In this respect, Preciado's work converges with and differs from the project of the SI, who sought the city and subjectivity to be in a state of permanent movement -- in the architectural plans of Constant for the utopian city of New Babylon, an endlessly reconfigurable labyrinth enabling 'an endless chain of encounters between mind, body, space, and architecture' (Sadler 1999: 141). Constant was, though, unable to realize his plans within a capitalist society; in contrast, Preciado's claim on difference makes active use of the pharmacopornographic technologies that late capitalism provides.

Performing queer drifts

Nonetheless, Preciado's molecular utopianism foregrounds the difficulty of encountering and thinking difference from within hegemonic conditions of gender -- when one does not drift freely, when the affirmative potential of synthetic hormones

is coupled to their criminality and when neoliberalism's preferred framing of difference as individuality may hedge against the possibility of collective action. To drift from or within gender may be to risk one's status as subject entirely, and to expose oneself to privation or harm even as drifting inscribes the very possibility of becoming. This double bind may be traced within theatre maker and performer Rosana Cade's Walking: Holding, a one-to-one performance in which audience members are taken on a carefully designed guided walk through a city with a series of 'hand-holders' chosen to reflect a range of different ages, ethnicities, social backgrounds and gender presentations. First staged in Glasgow in 2011 and since performed in more than thirty locations across Europe and in Hong Kong, each walk's route involves a range of spaces with varying levels of 'publicness' from busy shopping promenades where one might feel highly exposed (or, alternatively, ignored in the crowd) to less-trafficked side streets or alleys chosen by Cade -- working with artistic assistant Laurie Brown -- to invoke a sense of seclusion and, potentially, threat. Initially intended to address how same-sex couples and gender non-conforming people routinely face hostility, homophobic abuse or violence in public spaces, the work involves a broader meditation on the embodiment of intimacy and difference: it is a work in which a sequence of encounters with 'others' foregrounds the social norms and -- to invoke Preciado -- biocodes by which one's own social identity is composed and made intelligible as coherent, embodied or 'real'.

In my experience of the work in Glasgow during the Arches' 2015 Sexology season, this process involved several moments designed to prompt participants' awareness of their social identity. This dynamic was most immediately apparent when my first hand-holder -- a white middle-aged woman -- paused in front of a mirror suspended

above a shop doorway and then in front of the dimly reflective glass of a shop selling men's formal-wear where we stood considering our appearance as individuals, and as a couple. As I was passed from hand-holder to hand-holder of varying ages, ethnicities and gender presentations, and led through a range of urban spaces from busy streets to unnervingly quiet alleyways, a potentially detached viewing position was displaced for one in which I was prompted to reflect on the extent that I present as white, male, masculine and/or queer, as well as someone's lover, son or friend in a given context and -- more significantly -- the implication of my body in potential relationships of exposure, risk, desire, vulnerability and care. In its deployment of hand-holding as lens for examining this dynamic, Walking: Holding advertises the micro-instances of action by which one might intervene within the web of social relations that compose the self: episodes in which to drift might only take the form of a temporary surrender of the pretence to self-authorship and a corresponding willingness to imagine (and correspondingly sustain) alternative social worlds. When Walking: Holding was performed in Dublin in 2013, it came only weeks after a violent homophobic assault on the streets of the city, but the experience of taking part -- as Cade recounts in audio documentation -- represented a kind of watershed moment in its refusal of the inevitability of such violence: men walked holding hands in public 'and nothing bad happened' (Cade 2015). This account is not straightforwardly affirmative: in the same documentation, Cade describes an instance in which security guards responded to the presence of a performer wearing women's clothing by ejecting them from a supermarket, with the route for the rest of the day changing to incorporate the foreclosed path.

Such a reading does not frame queer space as a given territory or as a subversive use of (heteronormative) space but something more dynamic and, consequently,

uncertain. It describes a mapping of located ambiances that involves a process of transference (both in the sense of a movement from one place to another and as describing an exchange of embodied affects or ambiances). This perspective is informed by the work of Matthew Gandy, which proposes how we might shift our understanding of queer spaces from 'a politics of spatial appropriation towards an enriched engagement with the complexity of urban nature itself' (2012: 736) -- that is, as an ecology. On those terms, we might understand Walking: Holding as a form of *dérive* that is not only about changing 'the meaning of the city through changing the way it was inhabited' (McDonough 1994: 77) but which is also about treating the encounter between people, and between people and place, as constitutive of materiality and the values that give materiality credence and consequence. Here, the Situationists' desire for an urban materialism that was attentive to history and class may inform the work of a queer analysis, most especially when an oppositional framing of queerness as 'at odds' with 'the normal, the legitimate, the dominant' (see Halperin 1995: 62) may frustrate acknowledgement of the differential exposure to risk faced by queer subjects of different kinds. When José Esteban Muñoz argues for the necessity of a futural queer utopianism on the grounds that the present is 'impoverished and toxic', he is not concerned with an imagined, generic queer subject but precisely those 'who do not feel the privilege of majoritarian belonging, normative tastes, and "rational expectations"' (2009: 27).

Given these concerns, I am conscious that the time-bound, ordered nature of performance described above may afford a dynamic in which participants simply visit with difference before returning to the stability of their 'regular' selves, and in which the promise of a nomadic dramaturgy -- one 'punctuated by constant encounters with otherness as a multi-layered and multi-directional landscape' (Braidotti 2014) -- is

constrained by the linearity of the work's planned path. Returning to Preciado's work -- and reading it alongside Braidotti -- may invite us to think past this contradiction by refusing the premise of a subject composed prior to the performance who then simply chooses to act in favour of one whose 'shape and effectivity are never guaranteed; its agency depends in part on where it is located, how it occupies its places within specific apparatuses, and how it moves within and between them' (Grossberg 1988: 384). That uncertainty does not foreclose change but marks the terrain of possible intervention as a space in which one may have no choice but to drift -- that is, to surrender the privileged viewing position of the flâneur and open oneself to the city. Indeed, for the SI, the tension noted above might be understood as a purposeful dialectic in which things are 'shown to be aspects of processes' (Lukács 1971: 179) wherein the underlying relations that determine subjectivity may be grasped.

The precarious and yet potentially transformative agency of the queer drifter also animates the dramaturgy of performance artist Nando Messias' The Sissy's Progress, a work first developed during their PhD studies at the Central School of Speech and Drama following their experience of violent assault in the streets near their then home in Whitechapel, London. Split between the theatre and the street, Messias' performance sees them transition from performing a score of stylized and sometimes anguished gestures before being wrestled into a ball-gown by four suited men. Leaving the notionally safe space of the theatre for the public space of the street and adorned with a tail of brightly coloured balloons, Messias is followed by the men -- now a brass band -- whose music draws more and more attention to the performer's 'dramatically feminine' comportment (Messias 2016: 290). This drift is not destinationless but involves a calculated attempt to confront the ambiances that

constitute the (hetero)normative conditions of public space, and that might constrain the potentiality of collective action. As Messias notes in their own discussion of the work's development, each of the work's early stagings -- as a work in progress, as a dress rehearsal and for a public showing -- were marked by homophobic insults: though notionally protected by the safety of their numbers, audience members 'are placed in my uncomfortable shoes. They too become vulnerable' (289).

Though the purposeful dramaturgy of The Sissy's Progress -- and the ways in which the audience may be framed as onlookers rather than participants -- may distinguish the work from the *dérive*'s unplanned process, it also indicates the drift-like affects that may be generated when the notionally secure frame of theatrical action is subjected to the uncontrolled and uncontrollable conditions of urban space (and, in turn, urban embodiment). One might set out to walk a carefully planned route only to discover the risks of queer subjectivity that do not appear on any map, and cannot be anticipated outside of their instance. To the extent that the policing of gender norms is incorporated as a condition of the work's efficacy -- with the work 'activating' violence in order to reframe watching as witnessing (289) -- The Sissy's Progress involves a form of transing that reveals the vertical axis that 'moves between the concrete biomateriality of individual living bodies and the biopolitical realm of aggregate populations' -- in other words, the crowd -- by which biopower is cultivated and deployed (Stryker et al. 2008: 14). If nothing else, it is a drift that might remind us that the process of becoming-molecular or becoming-nomadic 'must indeed start from somewhere specific: a ground and accountable location' (Braidotti 2013: 346) and that the claiming of a fixed location is both inevitable and necessary for minorities of different kinds 'because you cannot give up something you have never had. Nor can you dispose nomadically of a subject position that you have

never controlled to begin with' (2003: 53). This location is metaphorical -- a speaking position born of the identity one claims or has thrust upon oneself -- and entirely literal: a street that one may have no choice but to walk. Such an approach is especially valuable because it might further resist the reductive framing of trans experience as 'chimera, play, performance or strategy' (MacDonald 1998: 4) in a manner that loses sight of the lived, material experiences of gender.

Thinking about queer performance in respect of Preciado and Braidotti calls us to consider the possibility of queer existence as involving something other than a self-secure subject without reinvesting in a mistaken understanding of queer as endlessly and even effortlessly protean. It requires us to pay attention to how matter matters and to shift, as Paola Marrati proposes in discussion of Deleuze's potential contribution to queer theory, from the question of 'what a body is' to the question of 'what a body can do'. Such an interrogation cannot be addressed by listing a body's capacities in advance by detailing its 'organic' or specific structure but only by attending to how bodies encounter other bodies: 'What we have to find out is how the affects of one body can arrange themselves with the affects of another body, how one exchanges actions and passions with the other' (Marrati 2006: 317). In both Walking: Holding and The Sissy's Progress, we are invited to understand that arrangement as one that is destabilizing because its consequences for the self cannot be predicted in advance, nor avoided without exempting oneself from contact with others. It is, at least, a performative intervention that advertises the constitutive vulnerability of those involved: it invokes a precariousness that emerges at the very moment at which a gender identity is asserted in recognition that the terms of one's self-definition do not belong to oneself alone. In such instances, the queer *dérive* does not abandon gender but travels it as an uncertain path in the knowledge that it

is uncertainty -- an exposure to others and to place -- that marks the possibility of alternatives.

If the Situationists sought to address how urban spaces were moulded by 'psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones' (Debord 2006 [1958]: 70), the queer works encountered here demand that we understand those contours as conditioning the very possibility of embodiment while nonetheless holding utopian potentiality -- utopian because the 'micro-instances of embodied and embedded self' (Braidotti 2013: 356) afforded by their dramaturgies are generative rather than merely descriptive of the relationships that might exist between bodies and spaces. A space that may be 'outside' of heteronormativity cannot be understood apart from the material conditions that we already experience; it is, consequently, not 'outside' but the result of a change in the relations that are constitutive of bodily and spatial norms. Preciado's gender drift -- at once metaphorical, imaginary and completely real -- equips us with a conceptual framework for grasping this dynamic, and for understanding how becoming molecular is not merely an abstraction but a means of attending to the micropolitical encounters by which bodies become subjects, and gendered subjects at that. The ambition of the Situationist *dérive* was not merely to map but transform the city and the subjects within it, and the possibilities for living therein: through Preciado's work -- and the practice of Cade, Messias and other artists like them -- we can begin to understand the kinds of materialist queer praxis such a project might entail.

Notes

1 Originally published under the name Beatriz P. Preciado, Testo Junkie has since been reissued under the author's given name Paul B. Preciado; Preciado's older publications reflect their former title.

2 Since 2010, transition-related medical care been funded by the French public welfare system through its inclusion on the ALD 31 (or 'affection de longue durée') list of long-term, evolving or disabling conditions that require prolonged and expensive therapies.

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